

DECLASSIFIED

Authority EO 12958
By CD NARA Date 2/3/05

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

8668-X

(Incorporates 8482)

December 29, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

HAROLD H. SAUNDERS
WILLIAM B. QUANDT *W.B.Q.*

SUBJECT:

Wrapping Up Several Actions on Morocco

General Walter's has sent you three memoranda [Tab A] reporting that King Hassan, via an intermediary, has made known his desire to send an emissary in the near future to communicate to you the King's wishes to "improve" relations. He is also pressing for a state visit in 1973. The two separate purposes of this memo are (a) to seek your decision on handling this emissary and (b) to seek your signature on a NSDM to record the judgments that came out of the recent SRG meeting on Morocco.

In particular, the memoranda at Tab A say the King wants us to know that:

-- The present "deterioration of relations" between us is isolating Morocco, leaving no alternative but to turn to the French. Since the US has been a "willing spectator" to several attempts to overthrow the monarchy, it is up to us to reverse this trend. The King apparently does not believe we had no prior knowledge of the August 16 coup attempt.

-- The USG should send a high-level representative to Morocco to propose "conciliatory changes in the status of US bases." Once again, the US should take this initiative. During this visit we should arrange to invite the King to the US sometime in 1973. This visit would be in the context of re-negotiating US assistance programs.

-- King Hassan wishes to send Colonel John S. Canton, USMC (Ret) to visit you at the White House. The King was scheduled to meet with Canton December 26 or 27 to discuss the visit. (Canton was

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DECLAS - Date impossible to determine.

BYAUTH - See attached Tab A.

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close to Hassan when he served in Morocco. The White House used him during the flap over Strausz-Hupe's proposed appointment to Morocco.) The King apparently wants him to discuss revision of our communications presence in Morocco as well as an envoy to Morocco and a state visit for him.

-- The King hopes that Ambassador Rockwell will soon be replaced, and goes so far as to suggest that Rockwell may have had some role in the two recent coup attempts.

This report has been communicated to State and to Ambassador Rockwell.

Along these same lines, Rose Mary Woods has sent you a memorandum [Tab B] saying that Bob Kleberg (King Ranch, Texas), has recently seen the new Moroccan Prime Minister, Ahmad Osman, and that Osman would like to see the President soon after the inauguration.

Comment: King Hassan and his new Prime Minister are feeling insecure and are grasping for reassurance from the United States. Objectively, the relationship between the US and Morocco has not "deteriorated," although the King's own position has. The problem we face is that the present uncertainty and insecurity in Morocco are largely the result of the King's policies and there is little we can do to help bolster his domestic political standing.

The King has made it clear that he believes we were somehow involved in recent coup attempts against him, which is not true, and is threatening to turn to France if we do not take initiatives to improve relations. We have no reason to be unhappy with the idea of his turning to France, whatever that may mean, nor can we dispel his suspicions of our involvement in plots against him. What we can and should do is to carry forward the dialogue on our mutual interests begun by Foreign Minister Benhima in New York this fall, especially on revising our communications presence as the King wishes.

It would seem better for the Department of State to handle this task, however, rather than the President. State had already sounded out Robert Murphy about visiting Morocco as a special emissary to King Hassan early next year, and this seems like a reasonable approach. You may recall that he did this once before in similar circumstances. Our recommendation below is cast in this vein.

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As a general backdrop for any new actions on Morocco, we have prepared a National Security Decision Memorandum [Tab C] for your signature based on the SRG meeting of November 30, 1972 on Policy Toward Morocco. At this tab you will also find the minutes of the SRG meeting for reference. This NSDM should encourage State to focus on the issue of our bases and the overall context of our policy toward Morocco.

We may eventually have to deal with King Hussan's desire to meet with the President but that does not need to be dealt with now. In any event, it would seem best not to be overly responsive to the King's ill-tempered comments relayed through an intermediary or in reply to an indirect bid from the Moroccan Prime Minister through Kleberg.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Walters be told that you or a member of your staff will see Col. Canton. Preferably Saunders should see him and then ask him to see Assistant Secretary Newsom.

Approve HK (Saunders)

Other _____

2. That Saunders call Kleberg to tell him tactfully that this is being handled through our own contacts and an emissary will be in Morocco soon. We will inform Rose Mary Woods.

Approve HK

Other _____

3. That you sign the NSDM at Tab C giving general guidance for our relations with Morocco. The main point is that we should now open negotiations on the US bases. We would support State in sending an emissary (Robert Murphy) to Morocco early next year to open discussions on the consolidation of our bases there and to reassure the King.

Approve HK

Other _____

Concurrence: Jeanne W. Davis JW
Richard T. Kennedy RTK